



First Class of Master Meat Crafters Graduate in Wisconsin

Release Date: January 26, 2012

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MADISON – Wisconsin has graduated its first class from the Master Meat Crafter Training Program last week in Madison. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has announced that 17 of the state's meat processors have completed this unique, one-of-a-kind program and have the distinction of being a Master Meat Crafter.

“These meat processors are breaking ground as the very first class of Master Meat Crafters,” said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. “The graduates have taken the next step, moving their interest into action, to create high-quality products that will increase consumer interest in specialty meats.”

The goals of the Master Meat Crafter Training Program are to: provide participants with in-depth and comprehensive knowledge about meat science and processing principles, provide development opportunities for future meat industry leaders, and help ensure the nation's meat industry remains strong and viable for years to come. To finish the program, the 17 graduates needed to complete four program elements including workshops, targeted homework assignments, a mentorship program, and a plant project. The program took two years to complete.

Wisconsin's Master Meat Crafters and a description of their plant projects include:

- **Nate Barden, Pardeeville:** Development of a small sausage shop design.
- **Roy Barden, Pardeeville:** Development of a small sausage shop design.
- **Matthew Bayer, Weston – Country Fresh Meats:** Development of a large diameter hard salami.
- **Mike Clark, Lodi – Lodi Sausage Company:** Development of the Lodi Sausage Brat Club.
- **Bennett Fraboni, Monona – Fraboni's Italian Specialties:** Increasing wholesale sales of existing product lines.
- **Andrew Geiss, Merrill – Geiss Meat Service:** Impact of phosphate use on cooked sausages.
- **Jennifer Hoepfner, Cascade – Quality Cut Meats:** Improving ham manufacturing techniques to improve customer acceptability.
- **Dusten Hoesly, New Glarus – Hoesly's Meats:** Improving bacon quality and yield with addition of phosphates and modifying manufacturing process.
- **Craig Huth, Richland Center – Richland Locker:** Determining shelf life of products sold to convenience and grocery stores.
- **James Johnson, Luxemburg – Otto's Meats:** Cost analysis study of raising and buying whole animals versus buying boxed meats.
- **Louis Muench, Cumberland – Louie's Finer Meats, Inc.:** Effect of chlorinated water on summer sausage.
- **Richard Reams, Hudson – RJ's Meats & Groceries:** Impact starter culture plays on flavor profile in Italian salami with wine.



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- **Judson Recheck, Beaver Dam – Recheck’s Food Pride:** Deli food safety audit.
- **Jeff Roberts, Watertown – Glenn’s Market:** Creation of a shelf stable snack stick.
- **Jake Sailer, Elmwood – Sailer’s Food Market & Meat Processing Inc.:** Effects of antimicrobials on shelf life of frankfurters.
- **Jeffery Schmalfeldt, Lake Geneva – Lake Geneva Country Meats, Inc.:** Re-evaluation of brat unit and development of a poultry-based brat for retail sales.
- **Dave VanHemelryk, Green Bay – Maplewood Meats:** Evaluation of various pump levels in turkey deli meat.

These graduates now have the accreditation of being a Master Meat Crafter signifying their skill set and understanding of meat science and processing. A seal of designation will now be used on products produced by the program graduates signaling their status as a Master Meat Crafter.

The Wisconsin meat industry has a \$12.3 billion economic impact on our state and provides 88,000 jobs. The state is home to 289 state-inspected meat plants, more than any other state, and over 120 federally-inspected meat facilities.

The Master Meat Crafter Training Program was developed in conjunction with the Specialty Meat Development Center of Wisconsin. It was supported by DATCP, University of Wisconsin Meat Science Extension, University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors.

To find these Master Meat Crafters and other specialty meat processors, use the interactive Specialty Meats Map at <http://datcpgis.wi.gov/SpecialtyMeats/>. For more information about the Master Meat Crafter Training Program, contact Jeff Swenson, DATCP’s Livestock and Meat Specialist, at 608-224-5082 or jeff.swenson@wisconsin.gov.

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